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## HARRISON OF JAMES RIVER

In all English speaking countries Harrison is a numerously represented surname. This holds good in Virginia as elsewhere. The Virginia census of 1782-5, which only covers a part of the State shows families of the name in a large number of counties. There have been all over the State, numerous families of Harrison not at all related to each other.

In addition to the family here treated of, there is in print but little in regard to any of the other families of the name, except the Harrisons of Rockingham county; the family descended from the emigrant Burr Harrison, which has been termed for convenience. "Harrison of Northern Virginia" (genealogy in this magazine Vols. 23 and 24), and the Harrisons of York County, &c., whose genealogy has been published in "The Harrisons of Sciminoe."

Mr. C. P. Keith, while preparing his "Ancestry of Benjamin Harrison", made, without success, extensive investigations with a view to ascertaining the English ancestry of Benjamin Harrison, the emigrant to Virginia. All that can be said of him is that he must have been a man of education and of some influence to have obtained the important position of Clerk of the Council soon after his arrival in the Colony.

1. BENJAMIN HARRISON came to Virginia some time before March 15, 1633-4, when he signed a document as Clerk of the Council. On July 7, 1635 he had a grant for 200 acres on Warrosquoiacke Creek, which he had bought the year before from John Davis. He also had a grant, dated March 24, 1643, for 500 acres on the south side of James River, which was regranted October 9, 1649 to Benjamin Harrison, "son and heir of Benjamin Harrison, deceased." Benjamin Harrison, the emigrant was a member of the House of Burgesses at the session of April, 1642. Though his plantation was in that part of James City County which is now Surry, the duties of his office probably kept him much at Jamestown. He died between 1643 or more probably 1645 and 1649. It has been stated that there were formerly in the churchyard at Jamestown fragments of a tomb of a Benjamin Harrison. If this account is correct it is probable that this was the tomb of the emigrant. If he made a will it was destroyed in the records of James City County.

Benjamin Harrison married Mary ———. She married secondly Benjamin Sidway of Surry County. Her will is as follows:

"In the name of God. Amen. I, Mary Sidway, being at this time sick and weak in body but of perfect sense & memory, prayse be to God: I make and ordain this my last will and testam't & manner & forme foloeing.

First. I bequeath my soule to God that gave it, trusting and steadfastly beleaving through the merrits of my blessed Lord & saviour Jesus Christ to receave full pardon for all my sinns; my body I commit

to the earth from whence it came to be decently buried at the discretion of my after named exors. And as for the worldly estate which God of his mercy hath bestowed upon me, I dispose of as followeth.

Item. I give & bequeath unto my Grand Daughter Hannah Harrison the horse colt that sucks on the black mare.

Item. I give & bequeath unto Jno. Kersey one yearling heifer. And for the rest of my estate my will is after my just debts paid that it be equally divided between my two sons Benja: Harrison & Tho: Sidway whom I do make my exors. to see this my will performed. As Witness my hand and seal this first day of March 1687/8.

the mark of

Signed Sealed & delivered in the presence of Mary M Sidway.

the mark of

Lydeia L Norwood.

the mark of

Sam'l S Alsebrook.

Att a Court held for the County of Surry, May 29th, 1688.

The above will proved in Court by the oaths of the witnesses.

Teste,

W. Edwards, Cl. Cur.

Vera Recordat per J. Edwards. Dp. Cl. Cur.

A Copy, Teste: A. S. Edwards, Clk—."

Benjamin<sup>1</sup> and Mary Harrison had issue

2. Benjamin<sup>2</sup>

3. Peter<sup>3</sup>. His step-father, Benjamin Sidway, in 1652, conveyed to him, as "Peter Harrison, orphan of Benjamin Harrison, deceased", a tract of land, and in a patent, dated 1655, he is referred to as "son of Benjamin Harrison, deceased, and son-in-law [step-son] of Benjamin Sidway". As he is not named in his mother's will it seems probable he was dead without issue at the time she made it.

2. BENJAMIN<sup>2</sup> HARRISON, of "Wakefield", Surry County, was born September 20, 1645, and died January 30, 1712-13. In an assessment of Southwark Parish 1668 he had 5 tithables listed, and in a Surry County tithable list in 1687 he reported 21. It was only in the 18th Century that great tracts of land were worked and very large numbers of servants and slaves were owned by Virginia planters.

As early as 1671 Benjamin<sup>2</sup> Harrison was a Justice of Surry and he was sheriff of the county in 1679. He was a member of the House of Burgesses for Surry at the Sessions of June 1680, November 1682, April 1692, September 1696 and September 1698. He was appointed member of Council in 1698 and remained a member of that body until his death. He married Hannah ———, whose surname is unknown.

The following is a copy of the will of Benjamin Harrison:

## WILL OF BENJAMIN HARRISON.

"IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN. I Benjamin Harrison of Surry County knowing ye uncertainty of man's life and how unfit we are when pains and sickness comes upon us to settle our worldly affairs I do therefore with due consideration make and ordain this to be my last will and testament hereby revoking making void and null all other former wills by me made.

First I bequeath my soul to Almighty GOD that gave it me steadfastly believing through ye merits of my blessed redeemer Jesus Christ I shall receive full and absolute pardon for all my sins. My body I commit to ye earth from whence it was taken to be decently buried at ye discretion of my executor and for ye worldly estate that GOD of His mercy and goodness He has bestowed upon me I dispose of that in manner following

Item: I give to my son Nathaniel one hundred acres of land whereon his mill now stands half an acre of land in ye town of Folwerdy [Flowedieu] Hundred and all my land in Martins Brandon in Prince George County all of which parcells of land I give to my said son and his heirs forever.

I give to my son Henry ye plantation whereon I now live with ye remaining part of ye land I bought of John Barker which is not already conveyed to him I also give him four hundred and fifty acres of land in one patent and one hundred and 15 acres of land in one other patent and all my land at Cabin Point all joining to my plantation land which several parcells or tracts of land I give unto my said son and to his heirs forever I also give to my said son all ye Negroes and other slaves that shall belong to my plantation at ye time of my death and all ye slaves that live at Cabin Point I also give him all my cattell horses mules sheep and hogs that belong to ye said two plantations I also give him all my plate and household goods as furniture, silver, wooden, pewter, brass and iron with all my bedding and all of my books I also give him my new sloop Henry with all my boats and ye sails and what else I have sent for for ye use of said sloop if it please God it come safe in

But my will is that in case my son Henry should dey without an heir of his body lawfully begotten then my will is that all ye real estate that I have given to my son Henry should goe to my son Nathaniel and to his heirs forever he paying my grandson Benjamin Harrison one hundred pounds current money out of ye said estate

Item: I give unto William Stringer my three hundred and fifty acres of land on the south side of Blackwater swamp where my quarter now is to him and ye lawful heirs male of his body forever but for want of such heir or in case he remove out of ye country then my will is that ye said land do goe unto my son Henry and ye lawful heirs of

his body forever And for want of such heir I give to my son Nathaniel and to his heirs forever I also give unto ye said Stringer one male negro not under 15 nor above 30 years of age and two cows and calves.

Item: I give unto Joel Barker that part of my land at ye Wild Cat that lies on ye south side of ye branch whereon he now lives to him and his heirs forever

Item: I give 20 lbs sterling to buy ornaments for ye Chapel and that my executor take care to provide them so soon as may be after ye new Chapel is built and my will is that five acres of my land be laid out where ye old Chapel now stands and that it be held for that use forever.

Item: I give unto my daughter Sarah four hundred pounds current money or sterling

Item: I give unto my daughter Hannah four hundred pounds current money or sterling

Item: I give unto my grandson Benjamin Harrison four hundred pounds current money or sterling to be paid to him when he comes to age

Item: I give to every one of my grandchildren one hundred pounds current money or sterling apiece to be paid to each of them as they come of age or marry which shall first happen my grandson Benjamin Harrison only excepted he being already provided for

Item: My will is that after my just debts and legacies above mentioned with my funeral charges be fully satisfied then I give all ye rest of my estate unto my son Nathaniel whom I do appoint my full and sole executor whether money in England or Barbadoes debts here in ye country goods in ye store or what else soever it be of what kind or quality soever that it is not already given away this my will.

In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 16th day of April 1711.

Benjamin Harrison.	(sealed )
	(with )
	(a )
	(loop )

Signed and sealed in ye presence of

Thomas Cocke	George Rochelle
William Short	John Jyns

Codicil:

I give to my son Henry besides what is above expressed these following debts Viz: John Somers his debt Richard Hamlin his debt John Vaughen his debt Capt. Clements his debt Ye debt due from William Harts estate and all my crops.

At a Court held at Southwark for the County of Surry Feb. 18th 1712 the above mentioned will of Benjamin Harrison Esq. was presented in Court by Nathaniel Harrison executor thereof who made oath thereto and being proved by the oaths of Thos. Cocke William

Short John Jyns witnesses thereto the same is ordered to be recorded  
and is recorded by

John Allen  
Cl. Cur."

Benjamin<sup>r</sup> Harrison was buried at the old church at Cabin Point.  
His epitaph is as follows:

"Here lyeth the body of the Hon'ble  
BENJAMIN HARRISON, ESQ  
Who did justice, loved mercy, and  
walked humbly with his God,  
was always loyall to his Prince,  
and a great benefactor to his Country.  
He was born in this Parish, the 20th  
day of September, 1645, and departed  
this life the 30th day of  
January 1712-13"

The tomb of his wife Hannah, also formerly at Cabin Point Church  
only states that she was born Feb. 13, 1651-2, and died Feb. 16, 1698-9.

Since the destruction of this old church at Cabin Point it is believed  
that these tombs have been removed to the family burying ground at  
Brandon. It will be noted, from Benjamin Harrison's will that he  
owned a portion of the noted Brandon or Martin's Brandon estate. The  
remainder was purchased from the English owners by his son Nathaniel  
Harrison.

(To be continued)